



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

May 18, 2001

In reply refer to: KEC-4

To: People Interested in the Starbuck to Lower Monumental Dam Transmission Line Project

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to build a new transmission line that could affect you. This letter briefly explains what is being proposed, outlines our process and schedule, and tells how you can comment on the proposal. It also tells where to call if you have questions.

Proposal - BPA is proposing to construct a transmission line from the proposed Starbuck Power Project to Lower Monumental Substation, a distance of about 15 miles (see enclosed map). The new 500-kilovolt (kV) line would begin at the proposed Starbuck natural gas-fired generation plant site in Columbia County, Washington, about six miles northwest of the town of Starbuck. The proposed line would then parallel existing BPA right-of-way through Walla Walla County to the existing Lower Monumental Substation about a mile south of Lower Monumental Dam.

Along most of its length, the proposed transmission line would be parallel and about 1,200 feet north of two existing BPA transmission lines. The 1,200 foot separation between the existing lines and the proposed line helps to ensure reliability of the power system. At both ends of the line, the separation would diminish as the line approaches and enters the substation yards. The proposed line would use steel lattice structures about 145 feet tall, similar to the existing lines.

This new line is needed to connect the Starbuck Power Project into the Northwest's power grid. Existing lines in this area are operating near capacity. With the power shortage that the Northwest is experiencing, new generation facilities are needed.

Alternatives - We will analyze alternative tower locations and the impacts of not building the line (an alternative we always consider).

Process and Schedule - We are just starting to assess the environmental impacts of the alternatives. We have teamed-up with the Washington Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) to do the analysis. While EFSEC carries out the environmental review requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act for siting the generation plant, BPA will carry out the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act in siting the transmission line.

BPA and EFSEC will share the work, resource information, analysis, results, and public contacts. The information gathered in the environmental study will be published in a joint Draft Environmental Impact Statement that analyzes both the plant and the transmission facilities. The study will be available for public review and comment this winter. We will hold joint public meetings at key points in the process and send you advance notice of meeting dates and locations.

Once the environmental review is complete, EFSEC will recommend to the Governor of Washington State whether to grant a permit to construct and operate the Starbuck Power Project and BPA will decide whether and how to proceed with the transmission project. If the Governor approves the project, construction of the plant could begin as early as next year in the summer. If BPA decides to proceed, construction of the transmission line would likely begin in 2003.

To Comment - If you have questions or comments on BPA's proposal to construct the transmission line, please call BPA's toll-free comment line at 1-800-622-4519, and leave a message; send an e-mail to comment@bpa.gov; or mail comments to BPA, Communications – KC-7, P.O. Box 12999, Portland, Oregon 97212. You can use the enclosed comment form.

Work Underway Now - You may see a survey crew in the area as they begin preliminary mapping and design work to lay out possible routes. Environmental specialists are conducting on-the-ground environmental analysis. If we need to access property along the proposed route for this work, we will contact property owners for permission.

For More Information - Please return the enclosed post card if you would like to receive a copy of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement when it is available. If you don't return the card, we will still let you know when the study is available.

If you have any questions about this proposal, please call me toll-free at 1-800-282-3713, at my direct number, (503) 230-5525; or send an e-mail to lcdriessen@bpa.gov.

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,

Lou Driessen
Project Manager

3 Enclosures:
Map
Comment Form
Return Post card

bcc:

Official File - KEC (EQ-14)

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